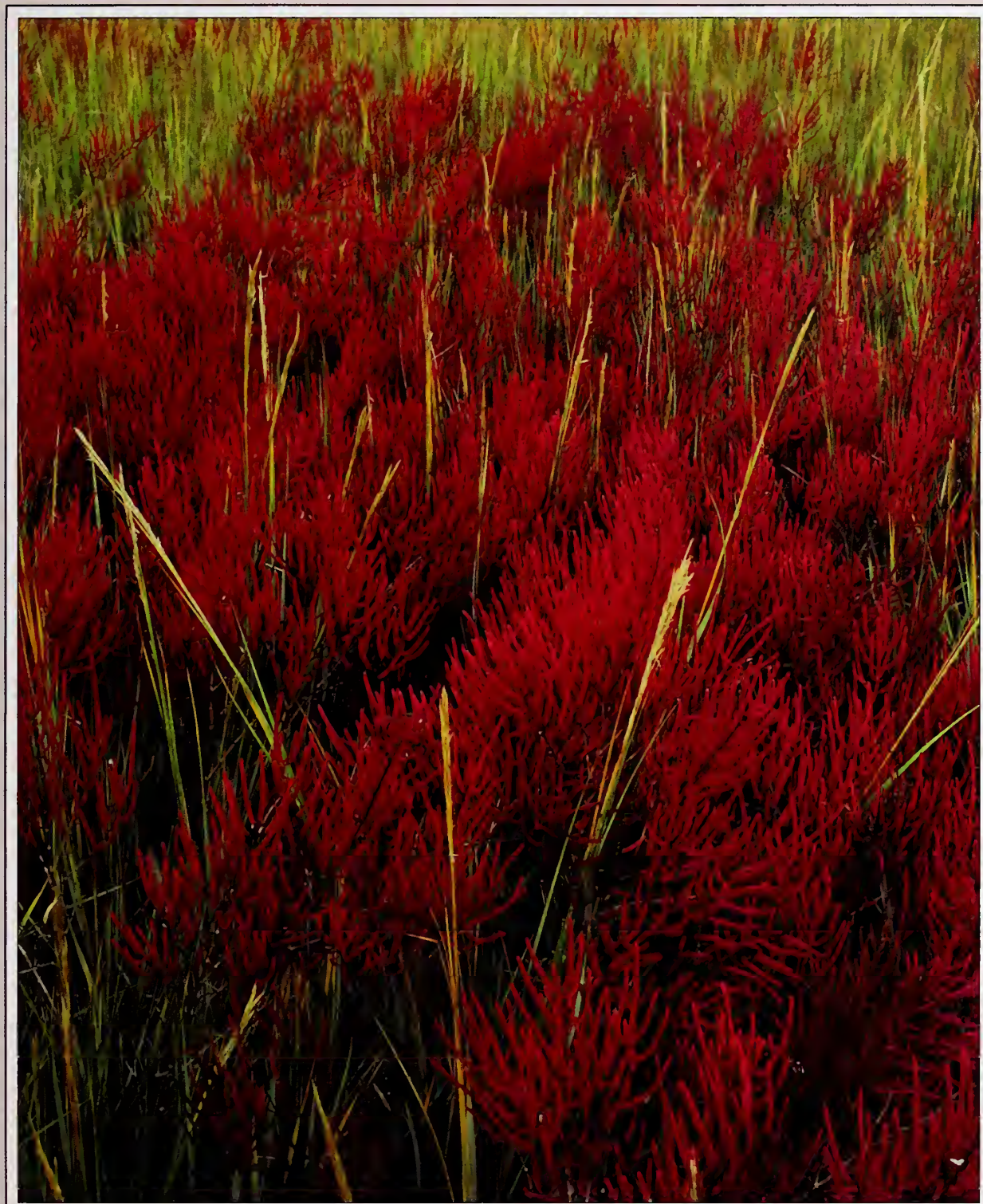


VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

JULY 1991

ONE DOLLAR



Editor's Page

It's been 75 years since the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) was born. I guess if we were just any business, like a carpet or car business, we wouldn't have so much to say about where we've been, how we've changed or where we're going. But when you're in a business that deals with living things and their protection, you find that your priorities change with every new piece of information you learn about your charges. That usually means people know who you were say, 10 years ago, but have a bit of trouble figuring out just exactly who you are today.

For the first 20 years or so of our existence, we had one goal: to beef up the dwindling game and fish populations in the state. The problem was, we didn't know exactly how to go about it. Plus, we didn't have a dime to do it with, anyway. In 1916, the Virginia Assembly had told us to go forth and produce bountiful populations of fish and game, and sell hunting and fishing licenses to support ourselves. So we hired a mess of game wardens, and told *them* to go forth and produce and make sure everyone had a hunting and fishing license buttoned in their pocket—and because they did just that, the agency squeaked through its first years.

In those days, though, we didn't know much at all about the business of conserving, protecting, or propagating fish or wildlife. We knew that something had to be done to boost fish and game populations in the state, but there simply was no biological information available to guide us, and so we grasped at any marginally sensible notion to manage our wildlife.

In fact, today nobody would dare call what we used to do "wildlife management." They'd be too embarrassed. For example, for decades, anyone who was committed to wildlife believed that predator control (which meant target practice on hawks, owls, and crows) and pest control practices (particularly of English sparrows, carp, and free-running cats and dogs) were essential to the survival of all "good" wildlife. At the time, the common belief was that if we managed the species we humans considered valuable, then the world would be, without a doubt, a better place. We had a lot to learn.

And with the passage of the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act of 1937 and the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act of 1950 which sent back to the states the proceeds of a federal excise tax on sporting guns, fishing rods and other related hunting and fishing equipment, VDGIF along with the rest of the fish and game departments across the country finally had a steady income and the resources to become educated.

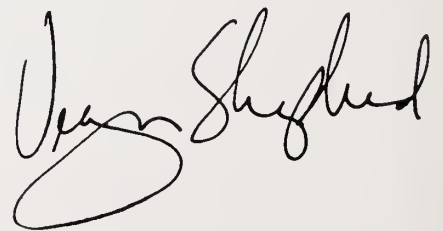
Our first successes came with game species. Whitetail deer, black bear and wild turkey were nearly nonexistent in the state, and the last beaver had called Virginia home in 1911. We learned what we could and could not do when it came to stocking and transplanting and hunting animals, and we began to gain knowledge about the biology and living needs of the animals we worked with. Gradually we were learning that you couldn't manage wild animals as you would a farming operation, because the interactions and variables between the animals and their environment

were much too complex. We began to open our eyes to the mystery of the natural world.

Our responsibilities to the fish and wildlife of this state haven't changed, but we're understanding them a whole lot better these days. Wildlife management today doesn't just mean setting hunting seasons and bag limits and writing tickets for violations of the law. It means things like being a watchdog for any abuse to wildlife, like the recent Furadan pesticide poisoning of songbirds and eagles, and going out on a limb to get such things banned from use in the state. It means guarding our nongame and endangered wildlife and blowing the whistle on anything or anybody threatening their recovery and survival. It means taking a stand in these times of too many people asking too much of the land for their own personal needs, and thinking too little about the needs of wildlife they share it with.

We often have to remind folks that we're not the same agency we were 75 years ago. We'd like to believe that we're older and wiser, but the least we can say is that we've come a long way from the days when we sent game wardens out with a copy of the game laws and a summons book without a lick of training, and when our idea of wildlife management was stocking Mexican quail all over the countryside and encouraging bounties on hawks and owls.

We're professionals now, and proud of it.



VIRGINIA WILDLIFE



The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. See page 24 for a nostalgic look at our law enforcement division and its accomplishments in 75 years.



The Department's Mockhorn Island, located between the Eastern Shore and the Barrier Islands, has a colorful history; see page 4 for details.

Cover: Glasswort, a saltmarsh species; photo by Susan Glascock.

Features

- 4 **Mockhorn Island: A Different Place in Another Time** by Curtis Badger
The island just off the Eastern Shore tells the story of one battle man lost against Nature.
- 9 **Kid-sized Fishing** by Bruce Ingram
Show your kids a good time fishing, and you'll have fishing buddies for life.
- 13 **Make Room For The Women** by Steve Ausband
More and more women are taking up hunting and it can only mean good things for the sport—and the men they join in it.
- 17 **VW Gallery**
Profile of Bob Henley
- 20 **River Bait** by Gerald Almy
Using live bait can be a change of pace for the river angler.
- 24 **A Giant Step Forward** by Virginia Shepherd
After 75 years, Virginia's game wardens have earned the right to call themselves the best law enforcement officers around.

July Journal

- | | |
|------------|---------------|
| 30 News | 33 Photo Tips |
| 31 Habitat | 34 Safety |
| 32 Recipes | |



photo by Curtis Badger

Mock

A different

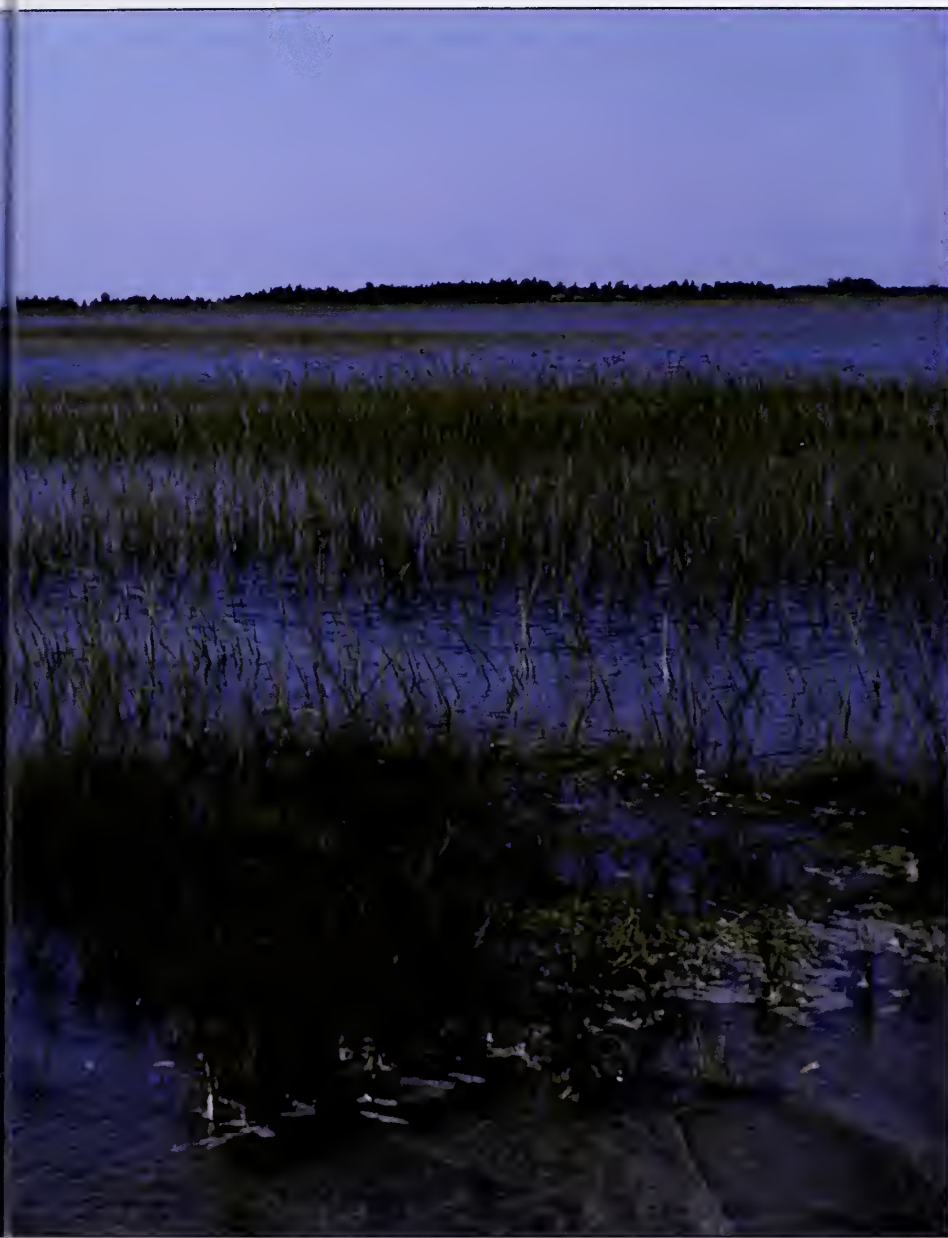


photo by Kesteloo

Mockhorn Island

place in another time.

by Curtis Badger

The island just off the Eastern Shore tells the story of one battle man lost against Nature.

The old home on Mockhorn Island is battered, but still standing. A second-floor dormer window, which peeks over a thicket of myrtle and ivy, is all you see of the house as you approach the island from the mainland, and it's not until you beach your boat and make your way through the jungle of vegetation that you find that there is indeed a house in there.

Vines wrap around the columns of the long porch, and as you make your way inside you see the old stone fireplaces, the graceful stairway, the wide windows designed to catch the sea breeze. In the yard are a dozen crumbling outbuildings, and the entire compound is enclosed by a massive concrete wall. You realize that, in its day, this was quite a place.

Mockhorn is a 6,000-acre marsh island that lies between the barrier islands and the mainland of Virginia's Eastern Shore in Northampton County. It's a long, narrow island covering some 10 miles, beginning on the north near the harbor at Oyster and extending southward nearly to the tip of the peninsula. Since 1959 Mockhorn has been owned and managed as a natural area by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF). The small, shallow, freshwater ponds that lace the upper marsh offer excellent hunting for dabbling ducks, and the low marsh that lies north of the old home site provides some of the best clapper rail shooting on the East Coast. The nearby waters hold flounder, weakfish, and drum, and oysters and clams grow along the shallow flats that separate the island from Mockhorn Channel and the mainland.

As Fax Settle, VDGIF wildlife biologist manager of the region relates, "I think of Mockhorn today as a refuge area and a hunting area. It's

so hard to get out there since it's only accessible by boat that not many people disturb the area."

And in addition to this great treasure of natural wealth, the island is compelling for other reasons, which, it seems to me, have to do with this once-graceful old home, which now is being reclaimed by the elements, and the battered concrete wall that gives the compound the feel of a fortress. There could be ghosts here, spirits of hunters of the past, men and women who gathered around the fireplaces on winter evenings, eating roasted oysters and drinking toasts to the black ducks that had made their morning hunts memorable.

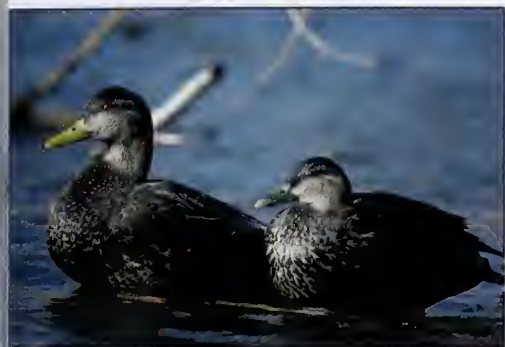
Those of us who hunt waterfowl have one foot firmly planted in the past, refusing to budge from an era that romanticizes our sport and gives it meaning. Perhaps that's what I like about a place such as Mockhorn; it is a totem, an emblem of a time we wish we could revisit. I explore the remains with the conviction that I'm going to find something remarkable, and I don't necessarily mean a tangible



Top: Seawalls may have kept the ocean at bay for a little while on Mockhorn, but eventually Mother Nature reclaimed her island; photo by Spike Knuth. Above: A few outbuildings remain as testament to the Cushman estate on Mockhorn; photo by Curtis Badger.



Willetts are one of many species that make their home on Mockhorn; photo by Rob and Melissa Simpson.



Mockhorn is a favorite wintering area for black ducks; photo by Rob Simpson.

object, just, perhaps, a clearer realization of what things were like back when the place was alive and well, when the home was filled with the aroma of roasting black duck and the sounds of children running barefooted through the hallways.

The history of Mockhorn unfolds like the pattern of growth succession in a forest. First there were the native Americans who hunted waterfowl and fished the shallow bays, gathering clams, crabs, and oysters. Then they were supplanted by the first Europeans, who depended upon salt made on the island to help sustain a struggling young colony. Then came the settlers who pastured their livestock in the high marshes, the market hunter and the wealthy sportsmen. And now, ironically, the island seems to have come full circle, its stewardship reverting to the Commonwealth, its landscape slowly erasing the temporary conceits of humans.

According to Ralph T. Whitelaw's *Virginia's Eastern Shore*, Capt. Francis Pott was given a patent to 1,000 acres on Mockhorn in 1657, but it apparently didn't remain in Pott's hands for long. On April 4, 1668 John Custis, the great-grandfather of Martha Custis Washington, entered into a contract with Peter Reverdy to make salt on the island, which at that time belonged to Cus-

tis. Reverdy was apparently an expert at the salt-making process, and a lengthy contract gave him instructions to build 312 clay-lined evaporation ponds to extract salt from sea water. Salt had earlier been obtained on nearby Smith Island through a boiling process.

Salt, in those pre-refrigeration days was a precious commodity. Capt. Samuel Argoll, exploring the area in 1613, reported to the acting governor of Virginia, Sir Thomas Dale, that the Eastern Shore held a "great

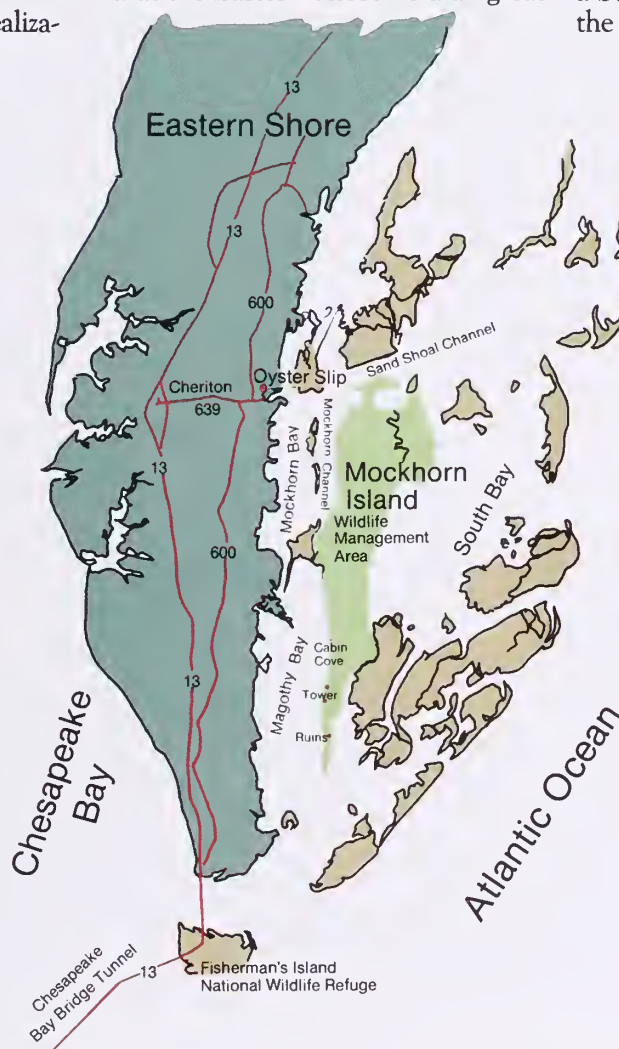
store of fish, both shellfish and other." The only problem was that the great store of fish, as well as waterfowl and game animals, would not keep for long unless preserved in brine. Thus, the fish and abundant game did the colonists little good unless they could be preserved for a reasonable length of time.

Whitelaw's history doesn't indicate whether all 312 evaporation ponds were built, or whether the venture between Custis and Reverdy was a business success. He does say that the island apparently remained in the Custis family until the early 1800s, when tracts were sold to various individuals, probably to be used as pasture for livestock. The handy thing about an island pasture is that fences are seldom needed.

Following the Civil War, as the popularity of sport hunting began to grow, the island saw its share of waterfowl and shorebird hunters, and several hunting camps were built. In 1902, a wealthy New York businessman named Larimer A. Cushman and his wife Catherine purchased property on the island, and soon they bought out the other owners. Cushman purchased a mainland site west of the island to use as a landing base, and he began an extensive building project.

Mockhorn, even in Cushman's day, was mainly made up of tidal marsh, but there was a fairly extensive tract of high ground on the south end of the island. Cushman

built a wall around the highest part of the island, using cedar posts as reinforcement for poured concrete. The wall served two purposes: it kept Cushman's livestock in, and it kept a deadly intruder out. The deadly intruder in Cushman's case was the tide, which during northeast storms could cover the island, damaging property and covering fertile soil with salt water.



Getting over to Mockhorn Island can be a tricky navigational proposition. Make sure you are well versed in navigational skills or get local advice from Oyster on how to reach Mockhorn. Because of the many channels and deceptively shallow water, it is easy to get yourself in trouble if you don't know what you're doing.

Once the wall was constructed, Cushman planted various crops, and his wife Catherine brought in non-native trees, shrubs, and plants. "Mr. Cushman planted alfalfa in fields north and south of the house, and he raised livestock," says Larimer Cushman Matthews, whose parents were caretakers of the island in the early 1900s and who was named for the island owner. "At the time the

Cushmans lived on the island full time and were pretty much self-sufficient. They built concrete hot-houses where they raised vegetables, and they had a concrete smokehouse where they cured hams and sausages. Cushman's family was in the bakery business in New York, and he bought and sold stocks, but he spent as much time on the island as he could. He called it his Kingdom . . . Cushman's Kingdom.

The hot-houses and the smokehouse still stand, as does a well-house, barn, and various other outbuildings. The fields where alfalfa once grew have reverted to salt marsh plants such as *spartina patens*, *salicornia*, and *Distichlis spicata*; the old wall, now breached by the storm tides, can no longer protect the soil from sea water.

The golden days of Cushman's Kingdom were the first three decades of this century, when this scion of a New York baking family turned a seaside marsh island into a spectacular private refuge. Two non-related events in the 1930s left an indelible mark, leaving damage that not even a concrete wall could keep out. Cushman was apparently heavily invested in the stock market, and when the market crashed in 1929 and the depression followed, he lost much of his fortune. Then, in August 1933, a violent hurricane raked the East Coast, and flood waters swept over Cushman's Kingdom. "The house and the other buildings were flooded, but they survived," says Larimer Matthews. "Mr. Cushman used to play the harp, and he had a beautiful, expensive instrument. The flood waters ruined the harp, and I remember him being very upset about that.

Of course, the salt water also did a great deal of damage to the fields and crops. In that storm, the wall did little good."

The Cushmans persisted in their island life, although any illusions of an inviolable kingdom must certainly have been lost. Within the space of three years, the Cushmans financial fortress, as well as the more literal security provided by his seawall, had both been breached.

The Cushmans kept the island through World War II, and following Larimer Cushman's death, Mrs. Cushman sold the property in 1948 to T. A. D. Jones, a defense contractor from Connecticut. Jones used the island as a hunting and fishing retreat until his death in 1959.

Today, the only remnants of a human presence on Mockhorn Island are the crumbling walls, the vine-covered buildings, and two World War II vintage lookout towers north of the house site which barn owls have been known to nest in. When I visited the island last spring with Game Warden Jim Gale, we found a solitary daffodil blooming where the main entrance gate once stood. It was probably one of many planted by Catherine Cushman generations ago, a single living survivor of the kingdom. The bed where it grew had been taken over by salt marsh grass, and the daffodil seemed out of place growing just a few feet from the oysters and clams of the tidal flat. It is ironic, I suppose, that as Nature slowly erases this once spectacular island retreat, the sole survivor should be a colorful, vibrant plant growing in full bloom just where you'd least expect it.

Nevertheless, Mockhorn Island is not a place abandoned. Atlantic brant use the open waters adjacent to the island, black ducks spend the winter there, clapper rails nest in its marshes, and many passerines and raptors use the island as a rest stop on their migration routes. Perhaps today, under the stewardship of VDGIF, Mockhorn Island has returned finally to its most rightful state—wild and untamed. □

Curtis Badger is director of publications for the Wildlife Art Museum of the Ward Foundation in Maryland and is a frequent contributor to Virginia Wildlife.



photo by Curtis Badger.

A single daffodil blooms where the main entrance gate to the Cushman estate once stood.



photo by David Ryan

Kid-Sized Fishing

by Bruce Ingram

It is a scene straight out of a Norman Rockwell painting. A veteran angler giving instructions, his grandson or granddaughter listening intently while holding a rod, a couple of dogs looking on, and all of them congregated along a pond's bank watching a bobber dance up and down.

It is a scene played out many times every summer all over the Old Dominion. If you have a child who has been begging you to take him or her fishing, there are several things which can be done to make the trip more pleasurable for everyone.

Bluegills have long been the standard starter fish for a first-time fisherman. Gill fishing can be as simple as dunking worms beneath a bobber or as challenging as probing deep water structure with crankbaits for one pound plus trophies. But it is with the rookie fisherman that the bluegill really proves its worth.

A prime consideration is the age of the child. Though obviously this depends a great deal on the individual, four is about the earliest age that many children are coordinated enough to handle a rod and reel. My daughter Sarah, for example, began asking me to take her fishing when she was two. By the time Sarah was 2½, she was claiming that she was catching bass out of our waterless backyard. And at age three, she was proclaiming—by holding her hands far apart from each other—that the bass she was landing were several feet long. (I

don't know where she got such stories. Certainly no one in her family has ever told fish tales.) It was not until Sarah was nearing four years of age, however, that she was actually



If you want to make a fishing partner out of your children, make sure you take the time and patience to teach them. And think about their fun, not yours; photo by Soc Clay.

able to use a spincasting reel—which is a good choice for the beginner. Spincasting outfits are easy to cast and are relatively inexpensive.

Bait is another important consideration for that first outing. Worms are a traditional favorite, but some children do not like the feel and the appearance of those beasts—especially after a hook has exposed a worm's inner workings.

I once took a friend's two children bluegill fishing at a nearby pond. The six-year-old boy became rather upset at the sight of the wiggling, squirming worm and would have nothing to do with impaling crawlers on his Eagle Claws. "Gross," "yuck," and "slimy" were some of the words he uttered, I believe. On the other hand, his four-year-old sister found the entire process very amusing and insisted on baiting both her own and her brother's hooks.

That little incident is noteworthy for several reasons. First, if you feel your child may not enjoy using live bait such as nightcrawlers, crickets, and grasshoppers, bring along some panfish poppers. These artificials, which are inexpensive and can be purchased at most tackle shops, are effective bluegill getters and can be cast fairly easily if several split shot are attached to the line a foot or so above the popper. This, of course, makes a floating lure sink, but gills aren't particular about such technicalities. In fact, this most democratic of all species favors both the beginner and the expert, pleases both the bait caster and the fly rodder, and charms one and all equally.

And, second, don't feel that fishing is just for boys. Not only did the four-year-old female battle as many panfish as her older brother, but she also insisted that she be the one who toted the fish home. I also had to promise to take her fishing again before she would agree to go home.

Another part of taking a kid fishing is the length of the outing. Once while on a trip with a five-year-old boy, he fished enthusiastically for 15



Fishing is a sport that is developed in youngsters. If you start them out right on the easy fish, like bluegills, you can soon have them progressing to species like walleye and trout—and size won't matter. Top: photo by Tom Fegley. Above: photo by Harry Murray.

minutes, caught several bluegills, and then decided that he wanted to do other things.

For the rest of the excursion, that young angler and I skipped rocks across the pond, viewed a mama mallard and her ducklings, and observed a variety of wildlife including bullfrogs, painted turtles, and a belted kingfisher. We then topped off our morning with some lemonade and a snack. The young boy went home marvelling about how wonderful "fishing" was.

The point here is that it's important to allow the youngster to determine his or her own pace while fishing. After all, there is more to a pond than fish. To force a child to fish or to make him think that he has to land fish in order to be successful can turn the beginner off to the sport.

One final tip about taking a child fishing: Mommy and daddy should leave their rods at home. This was agonizingly hard for me to do at first, because every time I see water I get the urge to wet a line.

But a young child really needs constant supervision around water—particularly on his initial trips. Besides, it's really hard to do any "serious" angling when you're helping the novice untangle line, bait hooks, adjust bobbers, measure and string fish, and remove hooks, lines, and bobbers from various trees. Also, it takes time to explain that it's no big deal that sneakers got wet, knees muddy, and that hands have a peculiar aroma about them.

So take your time. What you are doing is pretty important stuff, even though it might, as the day wears on, seem like glorified babysitting. Think for a moment about how important fishing is to you, and where you would be without it. Life would be pretty near unbearable, right? Just remember that when you take a kid fishing. □

Bruce Ingram is the Virginia editor for Outdoor Life magazine and a frequent contributor to Virginia Wildlife.

Things to Remember



When you take a kid fishing, you're building a memory; photo by Soc Clay.

While you're pond fishing with a youngster, it's a good time to note certain characteristics of these mini-impoundments for future reference. There may be jillions of four and five-inch bluegills around the rim of a pond, but slabs (those gills running $3/4$ of a pound and up) usually only frequent the shallows early in the morning and late in the evening. The rest of the day they will be feeding in deeper water.

Weedbeds near dropoffs, sunken Christmas trees and cedar bundles in four or five feet of water, ends of docks which extend into deeper water, and lily pads can all harbor jumbo panfish. A return visit to check out those potential hot spots may result in some rod-bending action.

Slabs are susceptible to a variety of baits, flies, and lures. In many parts of the country, leeches are a popular bait. However, these creatures are rarely available at Virginia tackle shops and few state sportsmen care to gather them, either.

Crayfish, crickets, grasshoppers, beetles, and insect larvae all attract bluegills and I battled a one-pounder last summer that gobbled a minnow.

Bait size is a difficult question when going after jumbo gills. The angler needs a larger bait to interest slabs, but he still has to take into account that even the biggest gill has a relatively small mouth. Start with naturals in the two-inch range and experiment with various lengths until you find a size which works best for you. Regardless of bait size, make sure your offerings get down to where the big ones lurk. Some fishermen crimp on splitshot to accomplish this while others adjust their bobbers so that the bait rides just off the bottom.

The long rod is also an effective way to catch plate-sized gills. While the smaller sunfish will often inhale

an amazing variety of dry flies, I prefer to tie on nymphs when going after larger fish.

Creations which imitate scuds (often incorrectly called freshwater shrimp) and mayfly, dragonfly, and damselfly nymphs will produce fish. However, some of my best results have been on nymphs which were designed for stream brook trout. Generally, if you give the gill something that looks alive, he'll cooperate. As for sizes, 10's through 14's are popular and some long rodders even advocate No. 8's.

Lure chuckers are often astounded at what a bluegill will try to swallow. I have landed gills that tried to swallow four-inch long bass plugs, for example. When you're strictly concentrating on slabs, try $1/16$ to $1/32$ ounce jigs and two-inch-long deep diving crankbaits. Some anglers tip their jigs with bits of worms or other live baits. Retrieve these artificials slowly around the same underwater cover where you would work bait and nymphs.

Ponds are by far the best places in the state to tackle bluegills, but some of Virginia's lakes also provide excellent action. Lake Prince, in the Suffolk area, is perhaps the premier panfish hot spot in the state offering redears and jumbo gills. Kilby and Burnt Mills are other eastern lakes which boasts good populations. In the west, Moomaw, Smith Mountain, and Leesville Lakes have healthy numbers of bluegills.

There is only one problem about Virginia's bluegills, and it is that they have so many confusing local nicknames. Sometimes it's hard to tell just what is being fished for. I have heard them called perch, sunperch, copperbellies, pond trout, and bream. A bream, by the way, is actually a European member of the minnow family and weighs up to 15 pounds. Imagine hauling in one of those from an Old Dominion stocked pond!

Whatever you call *Lepomis macrochirus*, chances are that he's motivating about in a body of water near you. And he's more than willing to entertain the entire family—B.I.

Make Room For The Women



*by Steve Ausband
photos by Lloyd B. Hill*

More and more women are taking up hunting and it can only mean good things for the sport—and the men they join in it.

The best meal I had last winter was at Trish Nunley's house. It was a game dinner for two dozen people, some of them hunters but most from non-hunting backgrounds. The meal was a hit, even with the guests who had never seen any meat for human consumption that didn't have plastic wrap around it. Our hostess and chef had roasted a haunch of venison, poached three dozen quail, made a spicy, Louisiana-style turtle stew, smoked two wild geese, and whipped up some sort of curry with squirrel and almonds in it. There was also some rice and even a green salad, for those who would care to eat green leaves while seated in the presence of so much wonderful protein. I try to look hungry whenever I even pass through the Roanoke area, just on the off chance that Trish is having a wild game dinner and will take me in and feed me.

Another interesting thing about this dinner—I mean besides the food and the number of appreciative guests—was that Trish had shot several of the entrees. The deer came from my brother, and I think I may have contributed a quail or two, but Trish does her own shooting, as well as her own preparation and cooking. Between forkfuls of smoked goose, I asked her about hunting, and about how she learned to hunt.

She grew up in the Midwest, she told me, and her first hunting was for pheasants with her father. Trish is an attorney working for a bank in Roanoke now, and her schedule doesn't allow her much time to hunt. When she can, though, she likes to go after turkey and grouse in the mountains north of town, and she hunts quail occasionally. She squirrel hunts with a scoped Ruger 10-22; for most other hunting she uses one of two 20-gauge Winchesters that belonged to her father.



As women join men in the field, many wonder, "why hasn't this happened before?"

Trish is fun to hunt with because she is enthusiastic about nature. (Everybody I've ever enjoyed hunting or fishing with has had that characteristic.) She fishes, hikes, and bird-watches, and her backyard looks as much like a miniature wildlife preserve as it is possible for so urban a little patch of trees and grass to look. There are squirrel feeders, bird feeders, hummingbird feeders, and a comfortable nook on the porch for watching and identifying anything that flies, climbs, or crawls into the yard. She keeps a mental tab on every-

thing that uses the feeders.

The game dinner and the conversation with Trish got me thinking about other women I knew who were part of an outdoor tradition usually associated with men. Now, my grandmother liked to fish, and I have known through the years quite a number of accomplished fisherfolk and wingshots who happened to be women. Still, old stereotypes die hard, and the word "hunter" does not, in most minds, conjure up an image that is anything but male. These days, such thinking is not only

wrong, it is self-limiting. We hear a lot of talk about passing on the traditions of hunting and fishing, about the rich legacy of the outdoors that must be shared with the young. For anyone to choose to limit that legacy to just half the population seems less than smart, especially since there are already plenty of people out there who would put a stop to all hunting and fishing if they could. The more young people we have who are interested in hunting and fishing, the better the chances that those sports will endure. The more people buying hunting and fishing licenses and contributing to organizations like Ducks Unlimited, the Wildlife Federation, and Quail Unlimited, the better off all sportsmen (sorry, sportspeople) will be. So let's think about taking our daughters hunting.

I talked with Tina Huffman recently about how she learned to hunt. Tina is a sophomore at Averett College. I found out she was a hunter when she asked, immediately after the start of last year's deer season, if I had gotten a good buck yet. I said no, and she told me (a little too smugly, I thought), that she had gotten a nice eight pointer on Thanksgiving Day. So I asked her how she got started.

"The same way boys do," she told me. "I grew up in a community where hunting was what kids did."

Tina is from Alton, Virginia, and most of her hunting is near the Halifax-Pittsylvania county line. Her earliest memories of hunting are with her grandfather, Ed Owen, who owns a farm near Volens. He took her after rabbits and squirrels, then doves, and she enrolled in a hunter safety class and a 4-H Sharpshooter's Program in high school. She began going afield with other hunters at the age of eight, and was permitted to do some shooting "not too long after that." She killed her first deer at 14, with a 30-06, and she confessed that she ordinarily cuts school the first day of the season.

"How come you didn't this year?" I asked her.

"I was afraid to miss your class. How come you didn't?"

"I was afraid to miss my class, too."

Tina knows four or five other women in her community who hunt, but many of the people she met since leaving home are surprised at her interest. As she put it, "about 92 percent of the people who find out I'm an avid deer hunter are freaked out by the idea." The percentage, she says, is higher among other women than among men. For Tina, though, hunting is just as natural as any of the other outdoor activities she enjoys.

"I love being outdoors," she said. "I like to walk in the woods, to swim, to be out on a lake in a boat. I've done a little archery shooting, and I love to horseback ride. Hunting is my favorite sport, but I like anything that gets me outside."

Vennie Moss is another woman who sometimes runs afoul of old stereotypes. Vennie, like Tina, is primarily a deer hunter, though she also hunts small game and loves to fish. I asked her what kind of deer hunting she liked—whether with a party using dogs or alone on a stand.

"I like to hunt alone," she said. "At least deer hunting. Part of the joy of it is being in the woods absolutely by myself, watching the sun come up. I hunt with a rifle, a .308 bolt action, and I like to take a stand and wait for something to come by. Riding around in a pickup truck with a bunch of guys is not hunting to me," she laughed. "That's just talking about hunting. I'll socialize after the hunting is over. I'll drive my deer by the store, and then we'll talk."

Vennie catches some ribbing at the local country store when she does drop by for a little socializing. Though her mother occasionally squirrel hunts, Vennie is the only woman in the immediate vicinity who spends her mornings in a tree with a .308, and a few of the good old boys at the store seem not to know quite what to make of the idea.

"I heard one of them tell another, 'You be careful; there's a little blond woman in the woods with a rifle. Wear lots of orange.' I knew he meant me to hear him."

"What do you say when they kid you?"

"Nothing. If they have trouble

with the idea of a woman carrying a rifle, it's their problem. I'm not going to let their problem keep me from doing what I want to do."

Last fall I took my daughter-in-law hunting. She had never been before. She already knew a little about shooting, and she caught on quickly to handling the little 20-gauge double she had borrowed from my son. Ginger has a contagious enthusiasm for the outdoors—the smell of fallen leaves, the look of a hardwood grove, the beauty of water and fields and woods in the early morning and just before dusk—and so I figured she'd do just fine as a hunter. She did.

I started her on squirrels, just as I had my son—just as most of us started. It's a fine way to discover hunting, even if you don't see any squirrels, since you get to carry a shotgun through beautiful woods, and you have to pay close attention to the look and sound of everything around you. Every man or woman I've ever known who really loved squirrel hunting had a strong aesthetic sense—and a real appetite for colors and textures and smells. After all, you don't spend much time shooting when you squirrel hunt. You spend more time watching and listening and just being a part of the woods around you. At the end of the day, whether or not you have anything for the pot, you find yourself thinking about the rich smell of humus, and the way the clear water looked flowing over the rocks in the tiny stream you crossed, and the bird that lit in the bush right beside your head while you were sitting with your back leaning against a tree. People who get bored with that kind of thing never make good hunters, no matter how they can shoot. I didn't know whether Ginger would get any squirrels, but I knew she would not be bored.

We walked into the woods behind the house, she carrying the 20-gauge and walking a little ahead, and I carrying a .22 rifle. There is an old farm road bed running through the woods, and walking is quieter there than in the thicker growth on either side. We planned to go down near the branch



With more women hunting, the sporting tradition is doubly sure of being kept alive.

at the bottom of the hill, then split up, but she found the first bushytail before we were well into the woods.

She did it right, freezing in mid-step when she heard the first tell-tale rustle in the leaves, then waiting until she heard it again and could tell its direction before she even put her foot down. It was just over a crest, just out of sight, and so she catwalked forward, only a step or two at a time, until she could rest against a big white oak, look around it, and survey the situation. I could feel my own heart pounding, and I was only an idle observer 20 yards to the rear.

Ginger had tumbled onto the world's luckiest squirrel, or maybe she rushed the shot. Anyway, she missed her first chance and the squirrel turned into a gray streak moving around a distant tree trunk. We hunted a little more before dark, and I think at least one of us got some squirrels that trip—or maybe the next one. I don't remember. What I do remember is that she was excited by being a part of the woods, by waiting and watching and listening and entering into a pattern of behavior that must surely touch some deep, atavistic springs in all of us, male and female alike. She wants to practice with the 20-gauge, she says,

so she'll be ready for the family dove shoot in the fall. Move over, guys; we've got another shooter. Two more shooters. Trish is coming too.

I seem to see more women in the field now, and that's a good thing. It is good for several reasons. In the first place, it means the somewhat tarnished image the "typical" hunter (whatever that is) sometimes has had in the urban press may be ready to change. In the second place, it means there are more sporting types, both male and female, buying licenses and supporting game management programs and contributing money to wildlife organizations. In the third place, it means that the 50 percent of the population which had previously because of a sort of *de facto* segregation, been accustomed to view hunting as an alien activity, is now more able to help cherish and defend the tradition. If you need another argument for taking your daughter hunting, how about just the possibility of spending more time together sharing something you feel very strongly about?

I don't think there's anything inherent in a woman hunter that would make her more or less responsible or safe than her male counterparts—except perhaps the fact that

she might have had to *want* to be a good hunter very much in order to be accepted by her peers. Anybody serious enough to put up with some of the guff Vennie Moss has endured would almost have to become a good hunter. I have hunted with a half dozen or so different women over the years, and I've not seen a game hog or a slob or a reckless shooter in the bunch. There's a fellow in the county who, like some of his neighbors, decided to lease his farm for hunting a few years back. He put an ad in the papers and wound up granting rights to a small group from Greensboro, North Carolina—about an hour away. There's nothing unusual about that, except that the leaseholders are mostly women. They come up frequently during the bow season, and then once or twice during the small game season and the gun season for deer. He says they are the best group he's ever leased to. They've never forgotten to close a gate, they are careful and considerate when they are on the farm, and he's never found so much as a candy wrapper or a cigarette butt on his place after they have left. He wants them back.

My father took me on my first duck hunt when I was six. I watched and shivered in the pre-dawn cold and got excited about the way the stars looked over the marsh and about the sound of wings in the half light, even though I was then too small to do any shooting. I took my own son on his first hunt when he was only a few years older than that, and when he was 10 he carried his own gun and was already a part of a tradition stretching back into our family as far as I can count the generations. He will take his own son someday—and his daughter, too, if he has daughters. He's too smart to miss the opportunity to pass along what he thinks is important to all his children. Besides, now he is married to a hunter, and between the two of them they are doubly sure to pass along the tradition. □

Steve Ausband is the chairman of the English Department of Averett College in Danville, and is a frequent contributor to Virginia Wildlife.

W GALLERY

If Bob Henley ever has trouble selling his work, all he'd have to do is hold a show of his work and sit there with it through the day. With his delightful ability to tell a good tale (the natural birth-right of any mountain-born and bred Virginian), this native of Roanoke would have people buying his paintings just because he made them laugh out loud.

But along with his good humor and charm, Henley is also a gifted artist. Fifteen years ago he quit his job with Norfolk and Western Railroad and plunged into the often precarious career of a full-time artist. About three years earlier, he had taken a step to become serious about his painting by enrolling in a class with a Russian immigrant painter. "I wanted to learn his technique of using thin paints in oils," Henley said, "so I took my work over to this man to look at. He stacked up my paintings like cordwood and said, 'This is all garbage.' He ended up pulling one of my works out that I didn't even like and sort of indifferently said that I could come to his class. 'If I don't like your work,' he said, 'I'll give you your money back.'" And did he ever like Henley's work? Henley laughs. "One of the other students said to me one day, 'If he treated me like he treats you, I wouldn't come back to the class.' I told him, 'I'm not here to make friends; I'm here to learn what he knows.'"

And Henley did just that. He has entered 17 juried shows and won prizes in 15 of them. And Henley never has any problem selling his work. "I took something up to the Whitehouse Gallery in Roanoke on Tuesday," he said. "On Thursday, the man had

already sold it."

Henley paints some 30-35 pieces a year, but despite his success, he insists that an artist's life is never easy.

"Nobody ever told me when I got into this that I had to have discipline," he laughs. "That's my problem. I'll take a walk in the morning and get to looking and messing around instead of working like I should." Plus, Henley is forever having to explain that it is possible to make a living being an artist. "I'll meet someone and they'll say, 'So, what do you do?' 'I paint,' I'll say. 'Oh, really?' they'll reply. 'My house needs painting.'"

Despite his lightheartedness, Henley is serious about his art and the subjects he paints. "I like to do the offbeat kind of works that people don't usually do," he says. "Once, I painted a baby rabbit in the middle of a road with a yellow double line, and the baby rabbit was crouched down. I titled it 'Stop.' The reason was twofold. First, you would 'stop' because you wouldn't want to hit the rabbit. But also, I think that people ought to 'stop' and think about what they're doing to wildlife."

Henley recalls that a gallery wouldn't even hang that painting because they thought no one would want to buy it.

"So, I took it to a sidewalk art show and won first place. And, I finally sold it to someone for twice the price I normally get for a work that size."

His screech owl featured in the February 1991 issue of *Virginia Wildlife* also illustrates Henley's bent for unusual composition. But, Henley does admit that once in awhile he goofs. "I once painted a fawn curled up next to blood-

root," he says. "The only problem was, bloodroot comes out in March and fawns are born in the summer." He laughed. "I explained that it was a premature birth."

Virginia Wildlife is proud to be able to feature the work of the two red foxes reproduced on this page this fall in a limited edition print available for sale and at a special discount for *Virginia Wildlife* subscribers. Keep your eye out for details in upcoming issues. Otherwise, if you just can't wait for one of Bob Henley's works, you can visit or write to Midtown Gallery, 209 Third Street, Winston-Salem, NC 27101. They carry about 30 of his original works. Bob Henley also has two additional prints available for sale. Write to him at Rt. 2, Box 183, Goodview, VA 24095 for details. □



Winter Comfort

This Bob Henley print will be available for sale in a limited edition in the fall. Keep on the lookout for details in the October issue of Virginia Wildlife for a special discount offer on them.

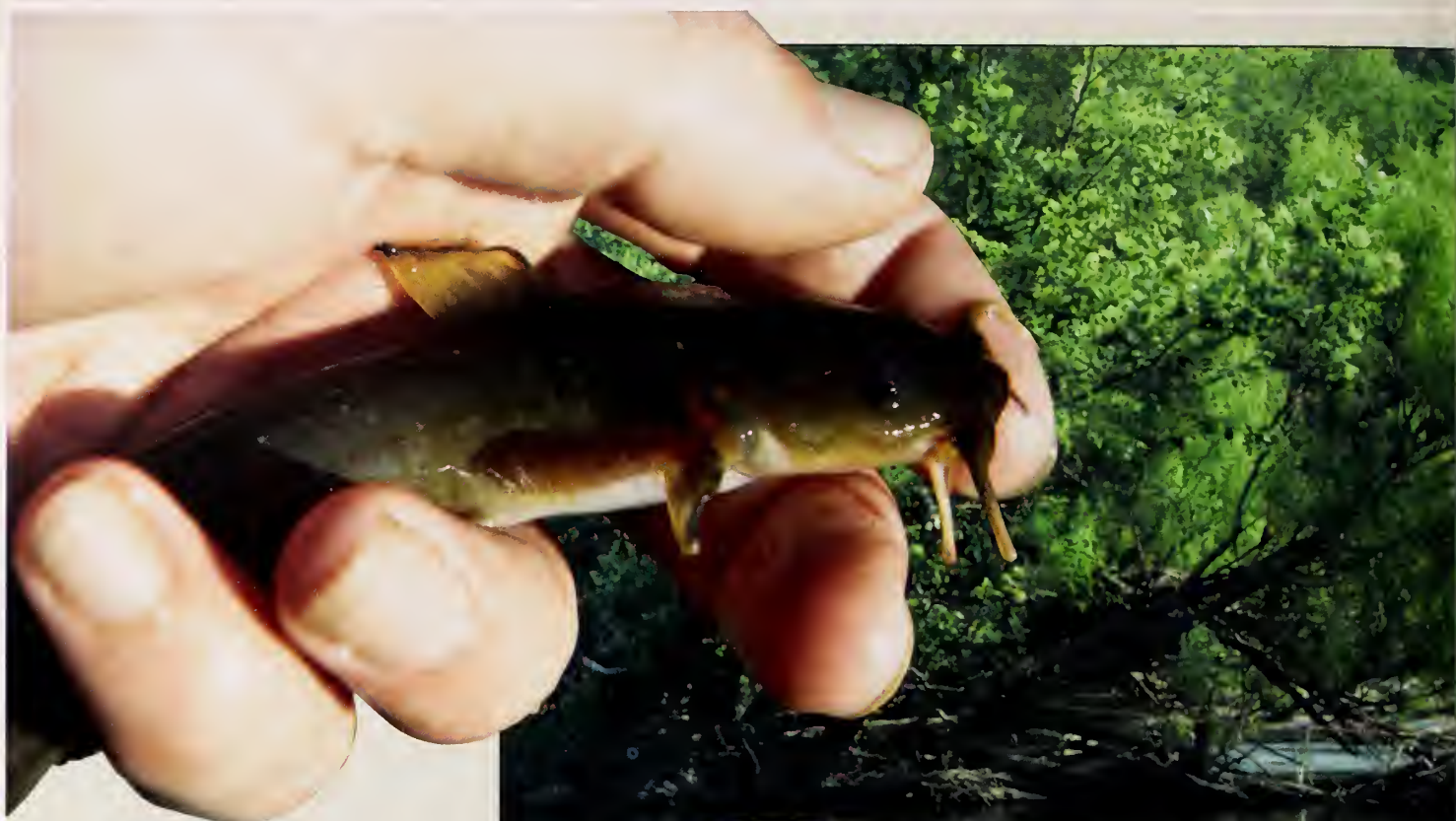


Pavane
Bob



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enley

Ed Henley © 89



Madtom; photo by Gerald Almy.

*Using live bait
can be a change
of pace for the
river angler, and
they just may
hook the fish of
a lifetime.*

River Bait

by Gerald Almy

Wading cautiously into the emerald flow of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River, I studied the pool while waiting for the waves from my movement to dissipate. The clear water lapping against my legs felt good. It was a hot summer day. A hazy blue-gray mist hung over the Massanutten mountain range behind me. The air had a thick, muggy feel to it. But waist-deep in the cool green river, the summer's heat didn't seem so bad.

Reaching into the aluminum bait bucket hanging from a stringer on my belt, I pulled out a three-inch long madtom and pierced it through the outer cartilage of its lips on a size 1 hook. Opening the bail on the spinning reel, I flipped a cast upstream and across, feathering the six-pound line as the offering neared its target so it would land softly.

Lifting the rod occasionally to keep the small catfish I was using as bait from hiding in the stones, I worked it down through the pool,



photo by Michael McCormack

over a limestone ledge dropoff and suddenly a sharp tapping telegraphed up the rod. Line peeled slowly off the spool. Taking up the slack I set the hook hard and a 1½ pound smallmouth catapulted from the water. After a raucous battle, I twisted the hook free and watched the bronze fish slip back into the depths.

Several casts went unrewarded, then I worked up to another deep pool that swung near shore and tossed out a madtom. The small catfish worked deep into the dark,

rubble-lined hole, then line began peeling off the spool. Closing the bail, I struck hard and felt the solid muscle of a huge smallmouth bucking against the thin ultralight rod. After two spectacular leaps and several tenacious runs, I worked the plump bass in, took a few quick pictures, then released him to battle again another day.

It was a citation-sized smallmouth in the 4-1/3 pound range, but I didn't want to kill him. In past conversations with Virginia Department

of Game and Inland Fisheries biologist John Kauffman, he had told me that a smallmouth in Virginia's rivers has to live eight to 10 years to reach citation size. Thinking of the tremendous odds against a fish living through so many challenges and so much angling pressure to attain that age, there was no way I wanted to kill him. Certainly he was nearing death anyway at that age, but I didn't want it to come tethered to the end of my stringer.

One more bass struck that summer day before I had to climb the steep river bank and return to work after the two-hour fishing session. I saw him slicing across the ledge in front of me with the tom in his mouth. But alas, the hook shook free. From the quick glimpse I had, it looked larger than the 4-1/3 pounder.

Such is live bait fishing for river smallmouths. You seldom catch the numbers of bass that a skilled fly fisherman or ultralight lure angler can, but for large sizes of fish, it's difficult to beat bait. Lure makers have shown uncanny ingenuity in creating metal, rubber, plastic and wood offerings that will wiggle, dance, shimmy, throb, plop and gurgle. But no artificial can ever duplicate that totally *alive*, frenetic movement that a real minnow displays. Quite often these natural, vibration-emitting sounds that bait give off are the only thing that will entice a bass into striking. This is particularly true of older, trophy fish that have survived more than a few seasons.

I know the pools in which I hooked those three large smallmouths see fishing pressure nearly every day in warm months. And I personally have probed them often with flies and lures. But never until I drifted a struggling miniature catfish through them did I know there were fish of such proportions present.

Baitfishing for smallmouths is a different type of sport, with different rewards, challenges and its own unique ambience. To enjoy it most, my suggestion is to learn to use it for the unique pleasure it offers, but don't become totally reliant on it—even though it does tend to produce



Wading and fishing with live bait brings you back to the essentials of living; photo by Harry Murray.

bigger bass on the average than lures and flies. Use it every few outings for a change of pace, but stick with artificials for the remainder of the fishing season. This is how I approach bait fishing.

Virginia has a wealth of premier river smallmouth waters. Among the best are the James, New, Rappahannock, Shenandoah, Rapidan and Potomac. Many other slightly smaller rivers are also excellent, with most born in the mountains and spilling down into the rolling piedmont section of the state. As long as they are rocky, clear and do not get above the upper 70's or low 80's during the summer, they likely have a good population of bronze bass.

Tackle for river fishing with bait is basically the same as that employed for lure fishing. The overwhelming first choice is a lightweight spinning rod of 5-1/2 to 7 feet with an ultralight open-faced reel spooled with 4, 6 or 8-pound line. For low, clear waters where most fish weigh 1-3 pounds, go with 4-pound line. If the river is slightly stained or holds very large fish, go with 6 or 8-pound line. As an alternative to spin tackle, you

can use a lightweight baitcast outfit and 6 or 8-pound line. This is particularly appropriate on larger rivers such as the James and New.

Terminal tackle you'll need includes a few bags of small to medium-sized split shot, several bobbers and a few packages of size 1, 2 and 4 hooks.

Some people tend to disdain bait fishing as too simplistic. Done properly, however, fishing with live offerings for river smallmouths can be a challenging, engaging fishing method. You should have a strong knowledge of your quarry's holding and feeding areas, know how to cast accurately, be skilled at fighting large fish on light line, and know where the various baits live and how they behave. Knowledge of which kinds of bait work best, and when and how to capture and rig them is also important.

The river smallmouth's diet consists mainly of small baitfish, immature and mature insects, crayfish and the odd frog, mouse or tadpole. In some states, crayfish are important offerings, but in most Virginia rivers you'll do best with one of three natural offerings—minnows, madtoms or

hellgrammites.

Minnows are the most easily obtained and popular baits. You can buy shiners in most bait shops or catch them on your own. Two methods that work well are using an umbrella trap at the edge of a lake or river or seining a small creek. Shiners, dace, chubs and suckers will all work if they're about 3-5 inches. Keep these baits in a plastic foam cooler if you have to transport or store them for a long period. When you actually head out to fish, it's more convenient to put the minnows in a plastic or aluminum bait bucket that allows water from the river to circulate through small holes, keeping them fresh and perky.

Minnows can be fished in two ways, depending on how fast the water flows and the mood of the smallmouths. The most common tactic is to position a bobber high enough above the hook so that the offering floats a foot or two off the bottom. Using the smallest float you can will keep the bait suspended. The less resistance a fish feels when it strikes, the better. I like cylindrical-shaped floats for this reason, because

there's less surface area meeting water when they're pulled under by bass. Add one or two small split shot a foot up the line and you're all set.

You can hook minnows through the back, just under the skin and get good action from the bait. Unless you're very careful casting, however, the minnow may fall off the hook this way. A more secure method is to pierce it through the cartilage of both lips, from the bottom up. Cast this rig upstream and across, probing eddies, pools, ledges, boulders and deep dropoffs near the bank.

When a fish strikes, feed line, but try not to let excessive slack develop between you and the bass. After 3-8 seconds, tighten the line and immediately set the hook by pulling back sharply with the rod and reeling simultaneously. Don't wait too long before striking or the fish may swallow the bait and be hard to release without injury. If a bass does take the hook deep and you want to let it go, clip the line. The hook should disintegrate.

There's no question that watching a bobber rocket under the water and surge upstream as a fish takes it is one of angling's greatest thrills. But at times it pays to skip the float and simply fish the minnow, hook and split shot rig. Work it right down among the bottom rocks and crawl it back to entice strikes—just like you would fish a plastic worm. If hangups are a problem, switch to a weedless hook.

Madtoms are small brown catfish that live under rocks in many small-mouth waters. They don't become available to bass often, but when they do, the fish greedily devour them. A few bait shops throughout the state sell them occasionally, but most serious "tom fishermen" catch their own. Find a shallow riffly area with

lots of large rocks and lift them up slowly. You might have to turn quite



Baitfishing for smallmouths on the Shenandoah River is a sport to be relished; photo by Gerald Almy.

a few stones before you find a madtom, but when you do it can be caught with either your hand or an aquarium net. Another alternative is to paint a cardboard milk carton black inside and place it next to the rock before you lift it. Madtoms are light sensitive and should swim into the "dark hole."

When handling these baits, be careful. The spines coming out their sides and upper back have a mild poison in them. Feels about like a bee sting if they poke you.

Use a size 1 or 2 hook for fishing madtoms, with no split shot. Although you can use a bobber, I prefer to fish them without one. The fish swim to the bottom on their own, so you'll need to lift the rod occasionally to pry them out of rocks and keep them visible to the bass.

When a smallmouth strikes, let it swim in for several seconds, take up

slack, then strike while reeling. These baits, more than any other, are strictly big fish offerings. You'll rarely catch a bass on a madtom smaller than a pound.

Hellgrammites are larvae of the dobson fly. They're fearsome-looking creatures, best held by grabbing them around the thorax with a thumb and forefinger. Slip a size 2 or 4 hook under this thorax collar to rig them and add one split shot a foot up the line. They can be fished with or without a bobber.

Hellgrammites range from one to four inches in size and can be caught in the same riffly areas where madtoms are gathered. Lift rocks and pick off the larvae with your fingers or use an aquarium net and scoop up the ones that fall free. Another method is to have one person stretch a seine out downstream while the other lifts and kicks rocks above to dislodge the hellgrammites so they drift into the mesh. Store hellgram-

mites in a plastic foam cooler with an inch or less of water and some leaves and sticks protruding above the surface for them to crawl onto.

These baits are particularly effective in or just below riffles and rapids because that's where the naturals are most abundant and that's where bass are used to feeding on them. They draw strikes from all sizes of bass from five inchers to five pounders, plus panfish.

If you want to be prepared for any conditions you might find on small-mouth rivers and experience a different type of angling pleasure than that enjoyed tossing lures and flies, give natural offerings a try this year. It takes a bit more work, but I guarantee you won't be disappointed. □

Gerald Almy lives on the banks of the Shenandoah River and has been a full-time outdoor writer for 17 years. He is currently a hunting and fishing editor on the staff of Sports Afield magazine.



This article marks the first in a series of articles celebrating the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' 75 years of conservation. We'd like you to look with us at where we've been, how far we've come, and where we're planning to go.



A Giant Step Forward

by Virginia Shepherd

After 75 years, Virginia's game wardens have earned the right to call themselves the best law enforcement officers around.



Top: Virginia's rough and ready game warden force, photographed in 1922 on the Capitol steps in Richmond; photo by Harrington's Studio.

Above: Hat badges were used with matching shirt badges from 1924-40's.

Right: A proud Virginia game warden, taken in 1946 by the Miller Studio in Covington.





Above: Group of Virginia Game Wardens and other conservation folks at the Poor Valley Game Management Area where they were attending the annual Poor Valley "Show-Me" Trip, 1950.
 Right: Virginia Game Warden badge used from 1916-24.



"As a result of the activity of the wardens, illegal hunting has been reduced to a minimum and hunting out of season is almost unknown except in a very few locations. The benefits accruing from these results is now manifest in a marked increase in game in every section of the State. Reports have been received from nearly every county to the effect that they now have more game than for many years, the estimated increase being from 25 per cent to 100 per cent over the past several years."—1917 annual report of the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.

Seventy-five years ago, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries had no biologists, no land managers . . . and no money. We began with one chief clerk, one assistant clerk and stenographer, and shortly thereafter—game wardens. In those early days, our law enforcement force not only defined the agency, these men kept the agency

alive. Without any state funding, we were forced to rely upon the revenue gained from the sale of hunting licenses to operate, which meant we depended on the game wardens to make sure all hunters carried one.

Nonetheless, at that time we didn't give wardens much else other than a badge, copies of the game laws and application blanks for hunting licenses. We didn't even give them a gun. And we couldn't guarantee them a salary or a steady job.

We did, however, at times properly thank them for their efforts. And if the agency's first annual report issued in 1917 seems a bit exaggerated, and credits our game warden force with superhuman successes, ah, well, remember: those were the good old days.

As one might expect, the history of the Virginia game warden force is full of tales of high adventure and a good dose of political intrigue. After all, a lawman's life is never dull.

R. Stuart Purks, a retired major and assistant chief of the division was hired in 1938, and recalls that "people were contrary in those early days. They thought they could make their own laws." Stories abound of stumbling onto moonshine operations, escaped convicts (a game warden got an extra \$25 for bringing one in), dumping bags of flour from airplanes on duck traps, and patrols on horseback (Colonel Gerald Simmons even had a horse that led him to violators. "His ears would twitch when we got close," insists Simmons.)

A precedent was set for political meddling when in 1916 the request was sent out to county boards of supervisors and city councils to recommend men in the community for game warden positions. For the next 46 years until 1962, if you wanted to be a game warden, you needed to be in a position to cash in on a political favor, and you most certainly needed to be a Democrat. In

the early days, wardens were particularly useful to the Democratic Party at election time, when they quite openly ferried homebound voters to and from the polls.

No background checks were ever conducted on potential appointees, no one worried if you could fire a gun or handle a drunk dragging an illegal bear out of the woods. Colonel Gerald Simmons, Chief of the Law Enforcement division today recalls that the only requirement made in those days was that you pass a test.

"I think there were five questions on the test, questions like 'Name the game birds of the state, and name the game animals of the state.'

"My dad was on the board of supervisors in 1954 when I was selected as a game warden and he bird hunted with the guy who was to be the next governor. I could have been the dumbest hick in Mecklenburg County and I had the job if I wanted it. It was as simple as that."

Once you got the job, you were given a badge, mailed a pocket-sized code book and directed to spend one week with an experienced officer in the field. The rest was up to you.

"Today," says Simmons, "You couldn't do that. You couldn't survive. I wouldn't dare turn an officer loose on his own to arrest people today without more training than that. The agency would be sued every day."

It wasn't until 1962 when the requirement was made that a game warden could not be assigned to work in the county of his residence,

that the political game of appointing game wardens ceased. Says Simmons, "A senator from Richmond didn't want to get you a job in Highland County. He wanted to get you a job right here where he could benefit."

Simmons also credits this change with bringing conservation law enforcement in Virginia closer to the professionalism it exhibits today. "The best thing about requiring a warden to live outside the county of his residence when he accepts the job is that you know you're going to get people who really want the job when they know they'll have to move to get it. After all, everybody would like to have it and live at home."

Once competitive hiring took hold, the whole complexion of the law enforcement force began to change. Under the guidance of now retired Colonel John McLaughlin and Major Stuart Purks, formal training was implemented. Today an officer must complete at least six months to a year of training before he is left to patrol an area on his own.

But, until 1982, game wardens still suffered under their old image. Major Lewis Brandt, Assistant Chief of the division recalls: "I was behind a schoolbus once and the bus stopped and the little kids got off, and one of them said, 'Hey look, it's the fuzz,' and the other one said, 'Nah, it's just a game warden.'"

The problem at this time was that though game wardens were often the only enforcement personnel in an area, they were unable to enforce general criminal law. Says Brandt: "I remember it being a particular problem at some of the marinas or campgrounds where people would get drunk or somebody would start a fight and people would say, 'Do something!' And you'd have to say, 'I can't.'"

Simmons added: "We went for years as the primary enforcement agency on the waters and we didn't have the right to arrest a man for operating a stolen boat."

The frustration at being unable to enforce the law in situations that demanded it resulted in vigorous



Virginia Game Warden badge, circa 1920.

lobbying and the particular support of Delegate Vic Thomas to give Virginia game wardens full police powers. In 1982, they succeeded in their effort and Virginia game wardens again made a major, if not the most significant, step in their pursuit of professional excellence in law enforcement.

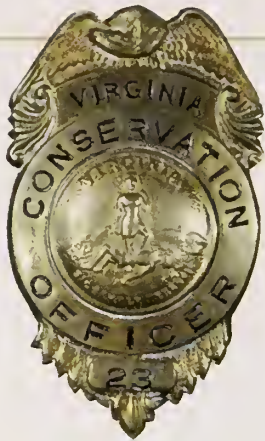
It's difficult for the average person today to grasp the awesome responsibility a law enforcement officer carries with him when he travels into the field. With the ability to deprive a citizen of his freedom by arresting him for a violation of the law, an officer is forced to be exceedingly careful of that power, especially in a democracy such as ours has evolved into today. Says Simmons, "Law enforcement has become much more technical than it was in the days when I first came on in 1954. I didn't have any training, but it really wasn't necessary. It wasn't as technical and there weren't so many Supreme Court rulings to keep up with."

Today, it is a death wish on the part of a law enforcement agency *not* to have in place the most professional, well-organized and well-documented system available of policy and procedures. Who would have thought 50 years ago that a lawyer today could have a case dismissed if it is revealed in the course of the proceedings that the law enforcement officer did not actually *read* the one-paragraph description of a citizen's rights, and instead *recited* them from memory?

Thus, in 1987, Simmons proposed to the then director of the agency, the late Dick Cross, that the law en-



In the early days, hunters wore buttons with their hunting licenses tucked in behind them.



Badge of the so-called "Flying Squadron" of Virginia Game Wardens assigned to the entire state and under the direct command of the Richmond office, circa 1948.

forcement division apply for national accreditation with the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). The Commission, created in 1979, was established on the premise that law enforcement professionals should set standards for themselves before others did it for them. And set standards they did. Over 900 of them were established which were to be met by law enforcement agencies in order to achieve accreditation as a professional law enforcement agency. Out of 20,000 law enforcement agencies in the nation, only 175 are accredited. It's not unusual for an agency to apply and then fail to measure up, since CALEA does not tolerate even one failure on any of its 900 standards, and most agencies take an average of two to three years to pass the test. The process to achieve the state-of-the-art professionalism in the law enforcement field demanded by CALEA is not easy or cheap—in time or money. "I told Dick Cross what I wanted to do, and I told him a few things about the accreditation process," says Simmons, "And he said, 'Well, I don't see how it can do anything but help you.' He said, 'Go for it.'"

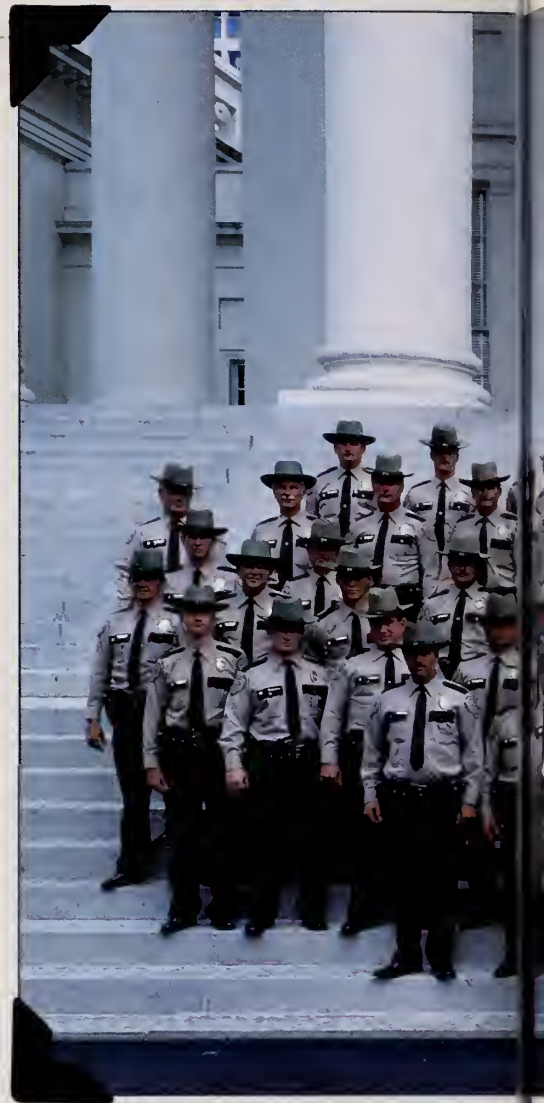
And they did. In 1988, the law enforcement division hired consultant Paul Hollandsworth to get the ball rolling. Hollandsworth had been the accreditation manager for the Virginia State Police a few years before, and his experience was invaluable in guiding us through the pro-

cess. You see, Virginia's game warden force was the first wildlife conservation law enforcement agency in the nation to ever apply for accreditation. This meant that the process was even more painstakingly deliberate, even more scrutinized, and even more important—to us and CALEA.

Says Rodney L. Harmic, Enforcement Administrator of the Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife who was part of the field team assessing Virginia's force in the final phase of the accreditation process, "Since Virginia was the first fish and game agency to be reviewed for accreditation, there were a lot of decisions to be made in terms of how we interpreted policies and procedures, and we knew we were making these decisions for other fish and game law enforcement agencies. We knew that they'd look back when they had a question in the future and say, 'What did the assessors do in Virginia?'"

The little over two years it took for Virginia to finally fulfill the 608 standards it had handed down to them based on the size and function of its law enforcement division were not easy ones. "Everything you do, they have a standard for it," says Simmons. "Everything from when to shoot and not to shoot to how to file your weekly report." As Dick Kitterman, field representative for CALEA said, "Our standards tell an agency what to do and then leave it up to the agency as to how they will do it." Manuals for every administrative and operational procedure, from covert operations to communications had to be created—or recreated. Harmic noted, "The accreditation process forces the agency to give the necessary guidance for everything they do. It forces them to come face to face with potential problems one by one."

On March 16, 1991, the law enforcement division of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries achieved the highest professional recognition attainable by law enforcement agencies with its official certification of accreditation. The CALEA assessment team's final report noted that "the division is viewed as a very progressive and pro-



fessional organization with futuristic program direction which provides a commendable service to the people of Virginia."

But, Simmons gives credit where the credit is due: "I'll tell you, I've said this a lot. I've said it on T.V. I've said it everywhere else. I guess it's something people think I make up. But I mean it. If the governor were to call me right now with a real sensitive thing that had to be done, and I don't care if he was being held hostage; I don't care what the thing was, and he said, 'Simmons, come and get this thing straightened out, and you have the full resources of the state behind you to do it,' I wouldn't go outside this division to get that five or six people I needed to do it, and they'd do it, and they'd do it right."

Maybe that's all that needs to be said after 75 years. Virginia's game wardens will get the job done. And they'll do it right. □



Above: The 1991 Virginia game warden force was recognized as a top flight law enforcement agency by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). Virginia's game wardens have the distinct honor of being the first conservation law enforcement agency in the country to be accredited (one of 175 agencies out of 20,000), having passed 608 operational and administrative standards set down by CALEA; photo by Dean Hawthorne Photography, Richmond.

Left: Governor L. Douglas Wilder presented VDGIF Executive Director Bud Bristow (left) and VDGIF Chief of Law Enforcement Colonel Gerald Simmons (right) with the official accreditation certificate; photo by Roy Edwards.

Special thanks to R. Stuart Purks for use of his Department memorabilia collection.

Your Presence is Requested

The Virginia Department of Game Inland Fisheries encourages all environmental and conservation-minded citizens to attend one of its five regional meetings to be held throughout the state in July and August. The purpose of these meetings will be to discuss the issues and concerns of Virginia's wildlife and boating-oriented public, and to hear your views on how our agency can better respond to these concerns in the future. We plan to include the subjects of hunting, fishing, wildlife-watching, powered boating and non-powered boating as topics of discussion.

Please try to attend!

VDGIF Public Meetings

July 10, 1991 (Wednesday), 7:00 p.m., Falmouth, VA, Brooks Park, Butler Road

July 17, 1991 (Wednesday), 7:00 p.m., Williamsburg, VA, Norge Elementary School

July 23, 1991, (Tuesday), 7:00 p.m., Lynchburg, VA, Lynchburg Holiday Inn

July 30, 1991, (Tuesday), 7:00 p.m., Marion, VA, Marion Holiday Inn

August 6, 1991, (Tuesday), 7:30 p.m., Staunton, VA, Staunton National Guard Armory □

Adopt-A-Spot Program

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries has developed an "Adopt-a-Spot" program with local citizens to help keep our boat ramps and landings clean and free of debris. The Lake Country Bassmasters of South Hill recently signed an agreement to "adopt" the Poplar Creek Public Boat Landing area on Lake Gaston for their club's monthly clean-up project. A sign recognizing their participation in this program has been installed at this site.

Why not join the Lake Country

Bassmasters of South Hill in their effort to keep our boat landings beautiful and "adopt" your own spot for your organization? Contact Steve Kesler, Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, P.O. Box 11104, Richmond, VA 23230-1104, 804/367-1605 or toll-free 1-800-252-7717 for more information. □

Endangered Species Poster Available

An 18" x 24" full color poster originally designed for the cover of the proceedings of the 1989 Virginia Endangered Species Symposium is now available and ready to frame for \$8.

Order your poster today by sending a check made payable to the Treasurer of Virginia for \$8 to: Virginia Endangered Species Poster Offer, Attn: Diane Davis, VDGIF, P.O. Box 11104, Richmond, VA 23230-1104. *Special discount:* Save \$3 in shipping and handling charges by coming in person to our Richmond office at 4010 W. Broad Street and purchasing the poster for \$5.

See p. 34 in your March 91 issue of *Virginia Wildlife* for a reproduction of the poster. It's beautiful! □

Wetlands Loss Report Now Available

Nearly two centuries of wetlands loss is chronicled in the pages of a new report to Congress, now available to the public through the Department of the Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The report, "Wetlands Losses in the United States—1780's to 1980's," estimates that approximately 53 percent of the country's original total wetland acreage has been lost in the lower 48 states since colonial times.

To obtain a copy of the report, contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Publication Unit, 1849 C Street, NW, Mailstop 130 ARLSQ, Washington, DC 20240. □

Free Publications Available

A new guide to help naturalists, biologists, and students identify the vegetation found in the Chesapeake Bay is available. "Field Guide to the Submerged Aquatic Vegetation of Chesapeake Bay" features illustrations and color photographs to make identification easy.

The field guide is available free in single copies from the Fish and Wildlife Service's Chesapeake Bay Estuary Program, 180 Admiral Cochrane Drive, Suite 535, Annapolis, Maryland 21401.

Copies of "Home for Birds" and "Backyard Bird Feeding" are available free from the Consumer Information Center, Pubelo, Colorado, 81009. And, free copies of "Join Us in a Partnership for Wetlands" and "Why Save Endangered Species?" may be obtained from the Fish and Wildlife Service's Publication Unit, 1849 C St., NW, Mail Stop 130 ARLSQ, Washington, DC 20240. □

You're Gonna Love This One

O.K., so last year's hunting and fishing licenses were a big bomb. The bright idea of making the license into one long form just didn't work. So, responding to the sportsman's comments and needs, we've tried again. This year, beginning July 1, you will be able to purchase a hunting license which will once again fit in your pocket. First, you'll have a Tyvek envelope about the size of a credit card that you'll slip each license (we'll start calling them certificates) into, and each certificate will be color coded to make identification easier in the field. You'll even have enough room to keep your boat registration and Virginia driver's license in the envelope!

We think we've made life easier for the sportsman—we hope you agree! □

Habitat

Jewelweed

by Nancy Hugo



Pale jewelweed, *Impatiens pallida*; photo by Hal Horwitz.

“**T**ouch-me-not” is another common name for this wonderful wildflower that grows along streambanks and in other moist, shady spots. “Why do they call it ‘touch-me-not?’” a friend of mine asked as she reached out and touched the plant. Ka-pow! The plant’s answer shot back at her like a missile. What Diane had discovered was jewelweed’s remarkable power to project its seeds great distances. Even a light touch at the end of one of jewelweed’s mature seeds pods will cause it to burst open and project its seeds ballistically. What great students we’d all be if all our questions could be answered so dramatically!

Jewelweed has other interesting characteristics, too. Hummingbirds love its flowers which are particularly well-adapted to their visits. A hollow tube or spur that projects behind the flower’s petals holds its nectar, and hummingbirds are among the few pollinators who can reach it. Jewelweed also has large seeds enjoyed by several species of birds.

I’m convinced that the juice in jewelweed’s succulent stems even helps heal poison ivy. I’ve used it after exposure several times and think it’s saved me many an itch. Although I use the juice in the stems, I’ve recently read that it’s the sac in the

spur of the flower that contains the liquid that soothes the rash resulting from poison ivy. Dr. James Duke, economic botanist at the USDA in Beltsville, Maryland, swears by jewelweed as a remedy for poison ivy, and when I asked him what part of the plant he uses, he said, “Whatever I grab, that’s what I use.” He just balls up stems, leaves, flowers—whatever his hand reaches first, and rubs them like a rag across his skin. “It works



Spotted jewelweed, *Impatiens capensis*; photo by Hal Horwitz.

best if you use it right after exposure,” says Duke, adding that a wet washrag with soap would probably do the same thing. I wish he hadn’t said that. I thought I’d once read that the actual chemical in jewelweed that’s effective against poison ivy rashes and blisters had been isolated, but now that I need it to bolster my case, I can’t find that reference.

Even if you’re skeptical about its medicinal properties, you’ll enjoy jewelweed for its beauty. The plants, which are annual, appear in May or

June, and they often form large, dense colonies. (Don’t be confused if you find a young plant with opposite leaves. Jewelweed’s earliest leaves are arranged opposite each other on the stem. Later, they’re alternate.) Plants grow 2-6’ in one season and bloom from midsummer until frost. Each flower has three petals and three sepals, but their shape is irregular, and it is actually one of the sepals that forms the elaborate funnel-shaped apparatus that projects from the back of the flower, narrows to a tube, then curls back toward the petals. The 1” flowers of spotted jewelweed, *Impatiens capensis*, are a yellow orange flecked with reddish brown spots; this jewelweed can be found in every Virginia county. The other species of jewelweed native to Virginia, *Impatiens pallida*, has pale yellow flowers with only a few brown spots; it grows mostly in the piedmont and western parts of the state. Both species, like violets, bear some buds that never open. These buds are self-pollinating, and they often bear more seeds than the plant’s regular flowers.

There are a couple of reasons given for why the plant is called jewelweed. It may be because the flowers, hanging as they do from graceful stems, look like jewels, or it may be because the plant’s leaves repel water and droplets of rain or dew stand up on them like jewels. “Snapweed,” referring to the seed pods’ delicate triggering mechanism, “lady’s eardrops,” referring to the way the flowers dangle like earrings, and “silverleaf,” referring to the way the leaves shine silvery, especially under water, are other common names for the plant. But if you really want a child, spouse, or friend to remember jewelweed, call it “touch-me-not,” then see what he does. If you’re lucky, jewelweed will teach him a lesson he’ll never forget. □

Recipes

A Striped Bass Dinner

by Joan Cone

Along with being fun to catch on lures and bait, the striped bass or rockfish is among the most delicious of all fish species. Those up to seven pounds are excellent baked or grilled whole, while larger fish can be steaked or filleted.

Striped bass meat is both firm and mildly flavored, so it can be used in chowders, casseroles or other dishes. Truly, the striped bass is as versatile in the kitchen as in its habitat.

Menu:

Marge's Broiled Crab Puffs
Baked Whole Striped Bass
Zucchini Patties
Creamy Cole Slaw
Peach Pie

Marge's Broiled Crab Puffs

- 1 pound blue crabmeat, fresh or pasteurized
- 1 jar (5 ounces) Old English sharp cheese, softened,
- 4 tablespoons lite mayonnaise
- 1/8 teaspoon red pepper
- 4 tablespoons margarine, softened
- 2 teaspoons prepared mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic salt
- 10 saltine crackers, crushed
- 6 English muffins, halved and then quartered (48 pieces)

Heat jar of cheese to soften. Combine all ingredients, except crabmeat and muffins, and mix well; add crabmeat. Place mixture on uncooked muffin triangles, using all 48 pieces. Freeze triangles at least 30 minutes. Broil until bubbly or slightly golden brown. Serve hot.

Note: Placed in heavy-duty freezer bags, these will keep up to 3 months in your freezer.

Baked Whole Striped Bass

- 1 (3 to 5 pound) whole, dressed striped bass
- Salt and pepper
- 1 medium onion, thinly sliced
- 2 medium tomatoes, cut into small pieces
- 1/2 teaspoon basil

Line a 2-inch deep roasting pan with aluminum foil. Place fish in pan; salt and pepper cavity and both sides. Place onion slices and tomato pieces on top of fish and sprinkle with basil. Bake, uncovered, in a 350 degree F. oven for 45 to 60 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. During cooking, baste several times with juices from pan to keep the fish moist. Serves 4 to 6.

Zucchini Patties

- 2/3 cup biscuit baking mix
- 1/4 cup margarine or butter, melted
- 1/8 teaspoon garlic salt
- 2 eggs
- 3 cups shredded zucchini, drained
- 1/4 teaspoon onion powder

Beat baking mix, margarine, garlic salt and eggs with hand beater until well blended; stir in zucchini and onion powder. Grease heated griddle if necessary or heat electric griddle to 400 degrees F. For each patty, spoon scant 1/4 cup mixture onto hot griddle; spread slightly. Cook patties until dry around edges. Turn; cook other sides until golden brown. Top each patty with dollop of dairy sour cream, if desired. Makes about 12 patties.

*Creamy Cole Slaw

- 1 cup low-fat cottage cheese
- 1/2 small head cabbage, shredded (about 2 cups)

- 1/3 cup raisins
- 1 medium carrot, shredded (about 1/4 cup)
- 2 tablespoons reduced-calorie mayonnaise
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon ground white pepper

In a blender, process the cottage cheese until smooth. Reserve 1/2 cup and refrigerate the rest for another use. In a large bowl, soak the cabbage in enough cold water to cover for 10 minutes, then drain well. Add the raisins, carrots and the pureed cottage cheese; toss well. Add the mayonnaise, salt and pepper, and stir until well mixed. Serve immediately or chill until ready to serve. Makes 4 servings.

*Recipe from *Enola Prudhomme's Low Calorie Cajun Cooking* (Hearst Books/ William Morrow & Co., Inc., April, 1991).

Peach Pie

- 3/4 cup sugar
- 2 1/2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 6 cups sliced, peeled, pitted peaches
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon margarine

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Prepare favorite pastry for double crust 9-inch pie. To make filling, mix together dry ingredients; toss with fruit and lemon juice. Turn into pastry-lined plate. Dot with margarine and make several slits in top crust. Cover pie with pastry; seal and flute edge. Bake in 425 degree F. oven for 40 minutes. Serves 6 to 8. □

Photo Tips

Your Summer Furnace

by Lynda Richardson

Stinging drops of sweat rolled down into my eyes making it difficult to see clearly through the viewfinder. The bank swallows I was photographing flew about busily inspecting each others' nest burrows, oblivious to my misery. For several hours, I had been using my car as a blind, and even with all the windows open, my equipment and I were slowly cooking in this metal and glass furnace on wheels. Dripping in my seat, I watched the swallows vanish into their cool retreats.

A camera in a car trunk, glove compartment or just sitting in the sun can spell disaster. In 80-90 degree F. weather, temperatures inside a closed car or trunk have been recorded at over 140 degrees F. When the temperature of a camera or lens exceeds 110 degrees, trouble starts. Lubricants begin to run, dripping onto delicate aperture blades, later causing them to gum up. If this happens, the lens will not stop down properly and is expensive to repair.

High temperatures affect metals and glass as well. Since they expand at different rates, they may shift out of alignment and make critical focus impossible. Another problem is the effect of heat on lens cement. Prolonged exposure causes this cement to soften and separate around the glass elements of your lens, and sometimes bubbles may form creating a loss of sharpness. Both make for additional costly repairs.

The newer makes of cameras are often more heat resistant than older



Bank swallows (Riparia riparia) build a cool nursery for their young in a dust pile. Like the swallow, photographers need to know how to deal with the heat.

models because electronics have replaced many mechanical parts. New camera and lens cements are now more stable and will withstand higher temperatures. I have been told by a Canon camera technical representative that if you can hold a "broiled" camera in your bare hands, it should function properly . . . but the film inside may be another story.

As film heats up in a closed car or direct sunlight, the gelatin material in the emulsions begins to soften. If this occurs in the camera, dust particles can become embedded in the emulsion. If film sizzles too long in your car, when it is processed it may develop unevenly, be off-color or appear washed out. Additionally, when choosing a film, be aware that professional type films are even more heat sensitive than amateur films.

Here are a few tips for taking your cameras and film around in the car this summer: Carry a large plastic or Styrofoam cooler with ice or reusable ice packs. Leave your film in

its plastic container, place in ziplocked bags and store these bags in the cooler. Plastic bags will protect your film from condensation or melting ice.

Try to keep your camera equipment in the car with you rather than in the trunk. With you, it will remain cooler. If you know you'll be stopping soon, place your equipment in the trunk before you get there and then park in a shady area. If you can't find a shady area, either take your camera equipment with you or place it in a sealed

plastic bag in the cooler.

Because of the heat, you will probably be traveling in and out of air-conditioned areas. If your equipment and film goes with you, they will experience sudden temperature shifts that can cause condensation to form. The immediate effect is often a fogged lens. When leaving a cooled environment, wait until the camera adjusts to the temperature shift before taking any pictures. During this time, do not open the camera or a roll of film. Until the temperatures are relatively equal, condensation can form inside the camera or film canister. Condensation in the camera can, over a period of time, cause rusting of the metals in the camera. Condensation on raw film is soaked up by the film emulsion and can lead to uneven processing.

While photographing around Virginia this summer, make an extra effort to protect your film and equipment from the damaging heat. You'll be glad you did. □

Safety

Small Boats Hazardous

by William Antozzi, Boating Safety Officer

Early this spring there were three drownings in Virginia rivers in which canoes and a small boat were involved. On the North Fork of the Holston River two boat occupants were plunged into cold water when their small johnboat sank. One survived; the other perished. Neither was wearing a personal flotation device (PFD) or life jacket.

On the James River near Howardsville, a canoe anchor caught on the river bottom causing the strong current to pull the bow under and swamp the vessel. One person who was wearing a personal flotation device survived, but the other occupant slipped out of his unzipped life jacket and disappeared beneath the surface.

On the same river, a canoe with two aboard went over Williams Dam in Richmond, dumping its passengers. One person wearing a PFD survived, but the other who was not wearing one drowned. Dam hydraulics held him underwater at the foot of the dam.

The account of the three foregoing incidents emphasizes the importance of wearing PFD's, especially in small boats. Canoes and other small watercraft similar in width and low freeboard are very unstable. Expert handling is required and even then they are hazardous.

Water can be a very hostile environment and cold water can quickly cause hypothermia, a numbing and debilitating condition which renders a person helpless. Add alcohol consumption to difficult situations, and disasters become even more probable. Drugs also affect the coordination and judgement of boaters who need to respond quickly and intelligently in dangerous situations. Alco-

hol, drugs, and boating do not mix.

Water power is evinced in the form of waves and currents. Many boaters do not realize the strength of water weight and power, and when involved, do not know how to cope. Even powerful swimmers may have great difficulty.

Canoes are particularly unstable. Three problems common to canoes and some other small boat operators are:

1. Paddlers are not wearing personal flotation devices. Life jackets are either forgotten, unzipped or used as padding. The life jackets are often found floating near a swamped craft or trailing after the boat as it floats downriver.

2. The victims are often non-swimmers. A look at the swimming histories of drowning victims shows that they have limited or no swimming ability. The ability to be at ease on or about water increases the ability to perform well in stressful situations. However, strong swimmers have also

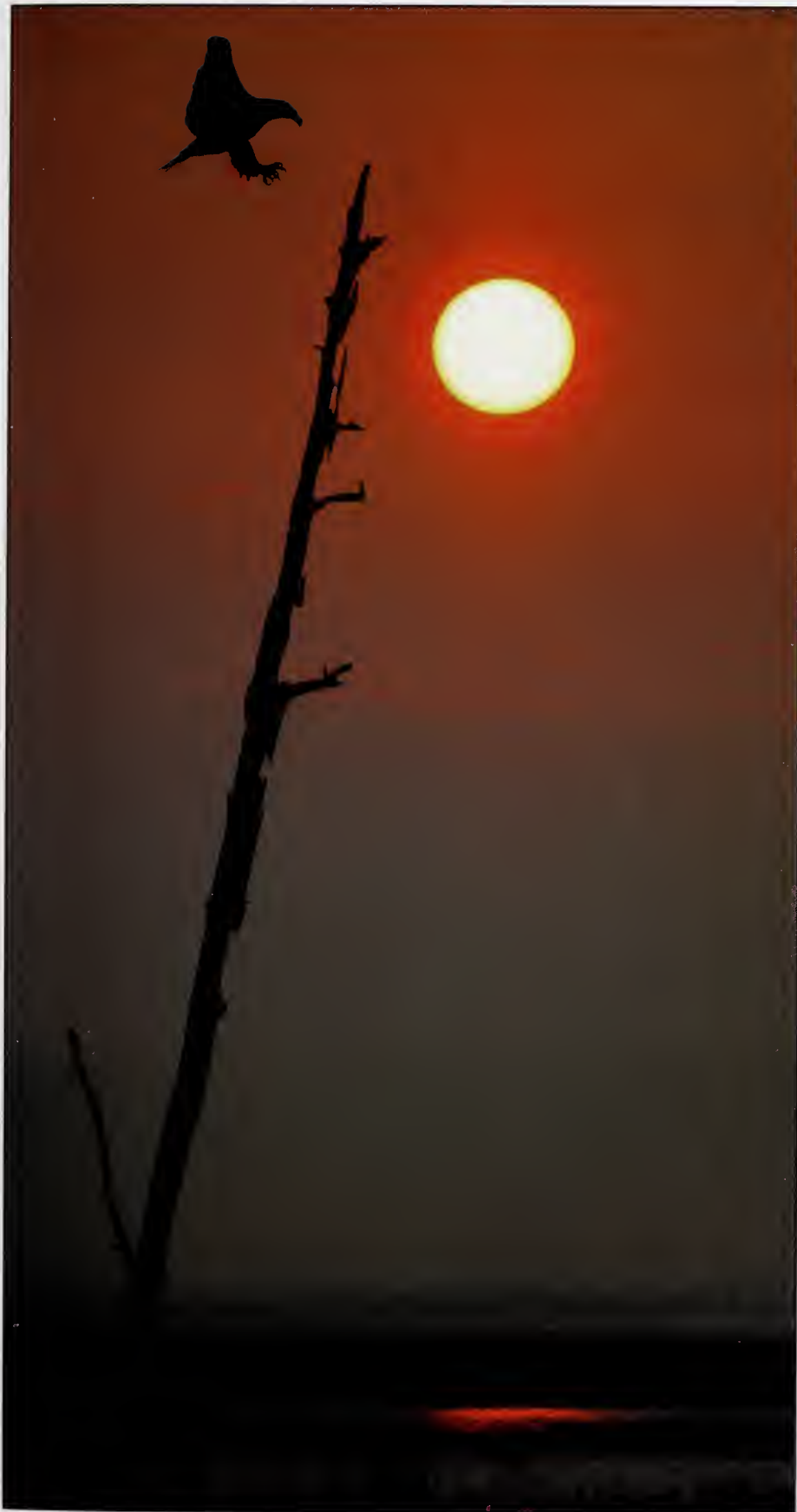
encountered problems because of the other factors.

3. The victims are inexperienced. Most fatalities involve inexperienced paddlers who have had no formal instruction or practice. The United States is generally a nation of self-taught paddlers who often do not understand the risks involved in the sport of canoeing, particularly in whitewater. However, an alarming increase in fatalities among skilled paddlers is occurring, although the total deaths are still fewer than those involving inexperienced paddlers.

Boaters may suffer from exposure to cold water if they are not properly protected. Although hypothermia is associated with cold weather, severe loss of body heat is a prospect present in every season. Proper clothing delays the onset of hypothermia, but it does not necessarily prevent it. Protective clothing lengthens the functional survival time of wet boaters, meaning that they have more time to get to safety. □



photo by Jack Randolph



Bald eagle; photo by Bill Lane.

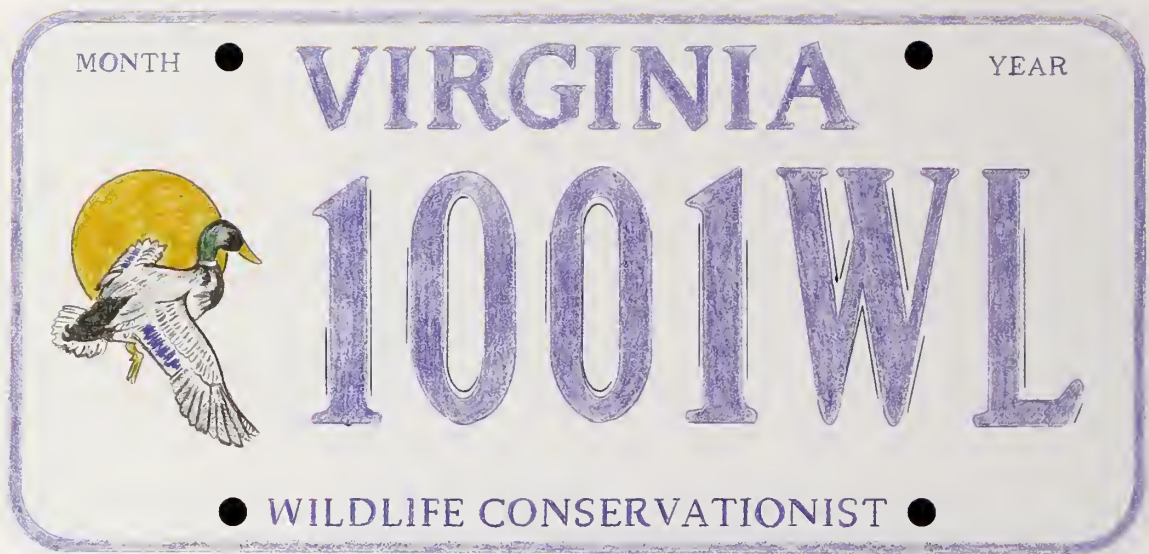


We're fighting for their lives.

Many of Virginia's wildlife are in danger. Suffering from habitat loss and the dangers of pollution which threaten their survival, many species in the state are struggling to survive.

The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries is responsible for the protection and conservation of all wildlife in Virginia, but we receive *no* state tax dollars, and we need your help to do our job. Help us fund critical research and management programs for the state's non-game and endangered species by contributing to our Non-game Wildlife Fund, which is supported solely by voluntary contributions made through our state tax-checkoff program and direct giving.

Please send your tax-deductible check (made payable to the Treasurer of Virginia) to, Virginia Nongame Wildlife Fund, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, P.O. Box 11104, Richmond, VA 23230-1104.



Give Wildlife a Ride

Why not give wildlife a ride by ordering a *Wildlife Conservationist* license plate from the Department of Motor Vehicles? This brand-new plate, created by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, is designed to generate money for the Game Protection Fund, which is used for wildlife conservation, management and research.

Order yours by filling out and mailing in the gray card at the back of this magazine. Show how much you care for Virginia's wildlife by purchasing a Wildlife Conservationist license plate today!